

# Statement on Gambling

## Barbados Evangelical Association



The Barbados Evangelical Association (BEA) has not conducted any scientific survey in Barbados or elsewhere to determine the effects of gambling, but it has been observed in many communities that gambling is a destructive activity.

Some of the deleterious effects of gambling are:

- i. The false values of getting something for nothing or much for very little.
- ii. Discouragement of thrift.
- iii. Promotion of greed – a vice which is apparently latent in everyone.
- iv. Temptation to weak-willed persons, who frequently develop an addiction to gambling.
- v. Family neglect, thus undermining the most important unit of society.
- vi. Hindrances to the development of a productive work ethic.
- vii. Wastage of money which could be used for productive purposes.
- viii. Promotion of gains by a few at the expense of all the other players.
- ix. Increase in crime, since gamblers tend to engage in crime to obtain money to gamble.
- x. Pauperisation of the gamblers, who often will have to resort to begging in order to gamble or just survive.
- xi. Promotion of opportunities for illegal activity of international agencies, thus leading to corruption in the public or/and private sectors.

Christians believe that life and the resources which we enjoy are gifts from God and everyone is a steward of those gifts with the responsibility to utilise them according to His will. Gambling violates the commands to “love your neighbour as yourself” and “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Neither does gambling represent a proper stewardship of money, time, or talent.

The Barbados Evangelical Association wishes to repudiate the claim being made in some quarters that the Church has been silent on the matter of gambling and the ills associated therewith. The membership of BEA has always spoken out from its more than 300 pulpits against the practices of gambling for many years. Furthermore, many of these messages have been broadcast by the electronic media and reported in the press. Because some Christian Churches have tolerated some of the less harmful games, such as raffles, in no way means that the Church in general approves and sanctions lotteries and casinos.

In any event the Church has the right, indeed the inescapable responsibility, to speak when it perceives increasingly dangerous trends in the society, even if it did miss or failed to note the danger signals in the nascent stages.

The level of gambling in Barbados has now reached alarming proportions and threatens to engulf increasing numbers of our people both poor and rich. BEA considers that the addition of casino gambling, even if only for the tourists, will further corrupt our morals and undermine the spirit of honest enterprise of our nation. BEA opposes the introduction of casino gambling and appeals to the Government to act without delay to arrest the growth of gambling in this nation and also to reduce the number of lotteries which are now draining the resources of the country.

The suggestion that casinos may be located in the country for tourist gamblers only may be compared to implanting a cancerous cell in the body on the pretense that it can be isolated from the other cells and will not contaminate them.

The introduction of casino gambling in Barbados or the extension of existing forms of gambling will be morally harmful, economically destructive, socially intolerable, and a serious disfigurement of our national heritage.



*1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (NIV).*